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# INDIANA JONES™

## AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE

### CHAPTER ONE

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inks & finishes

**John A. Wilcox**
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**Clem Robins**
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**Teena Gores**
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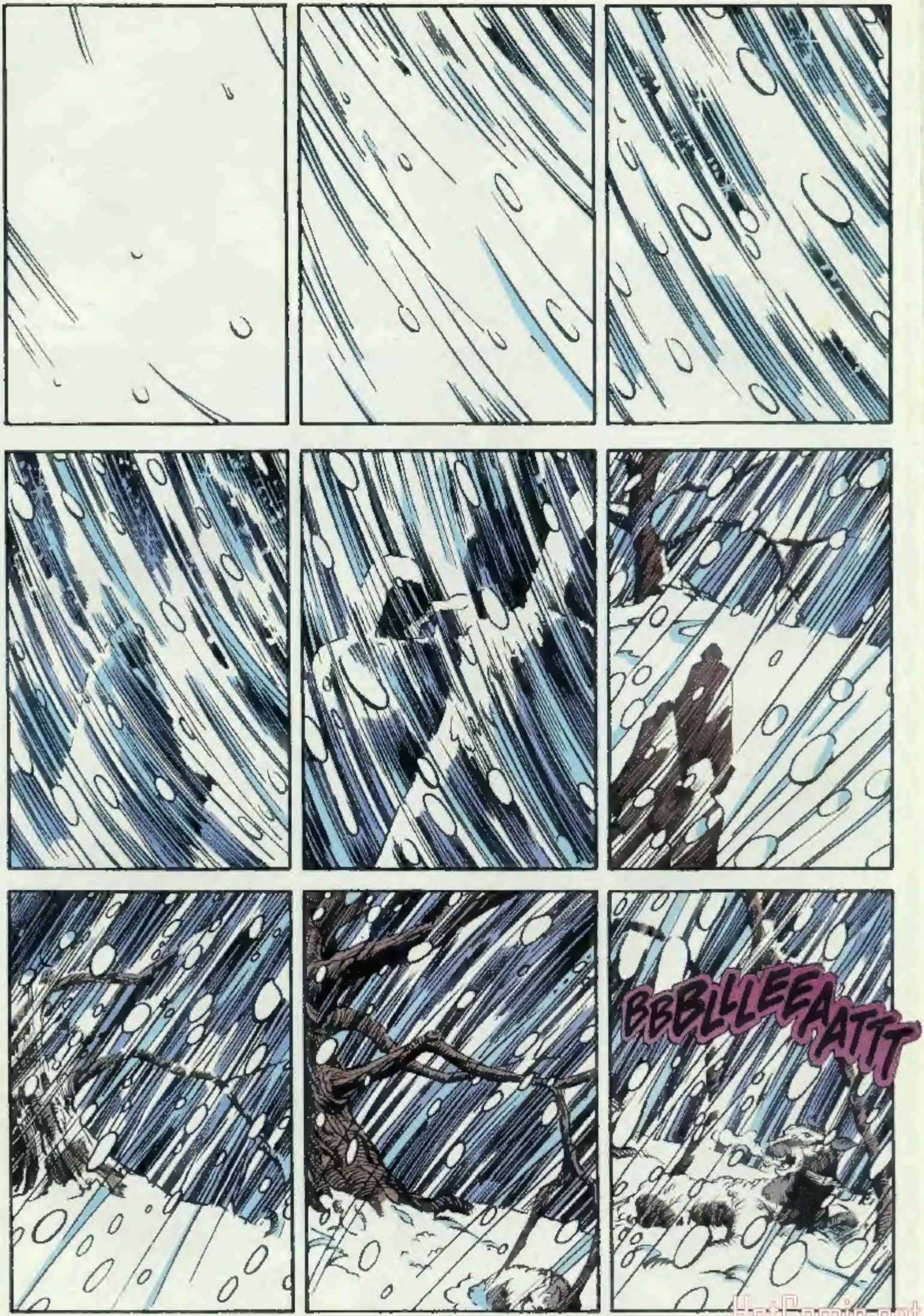

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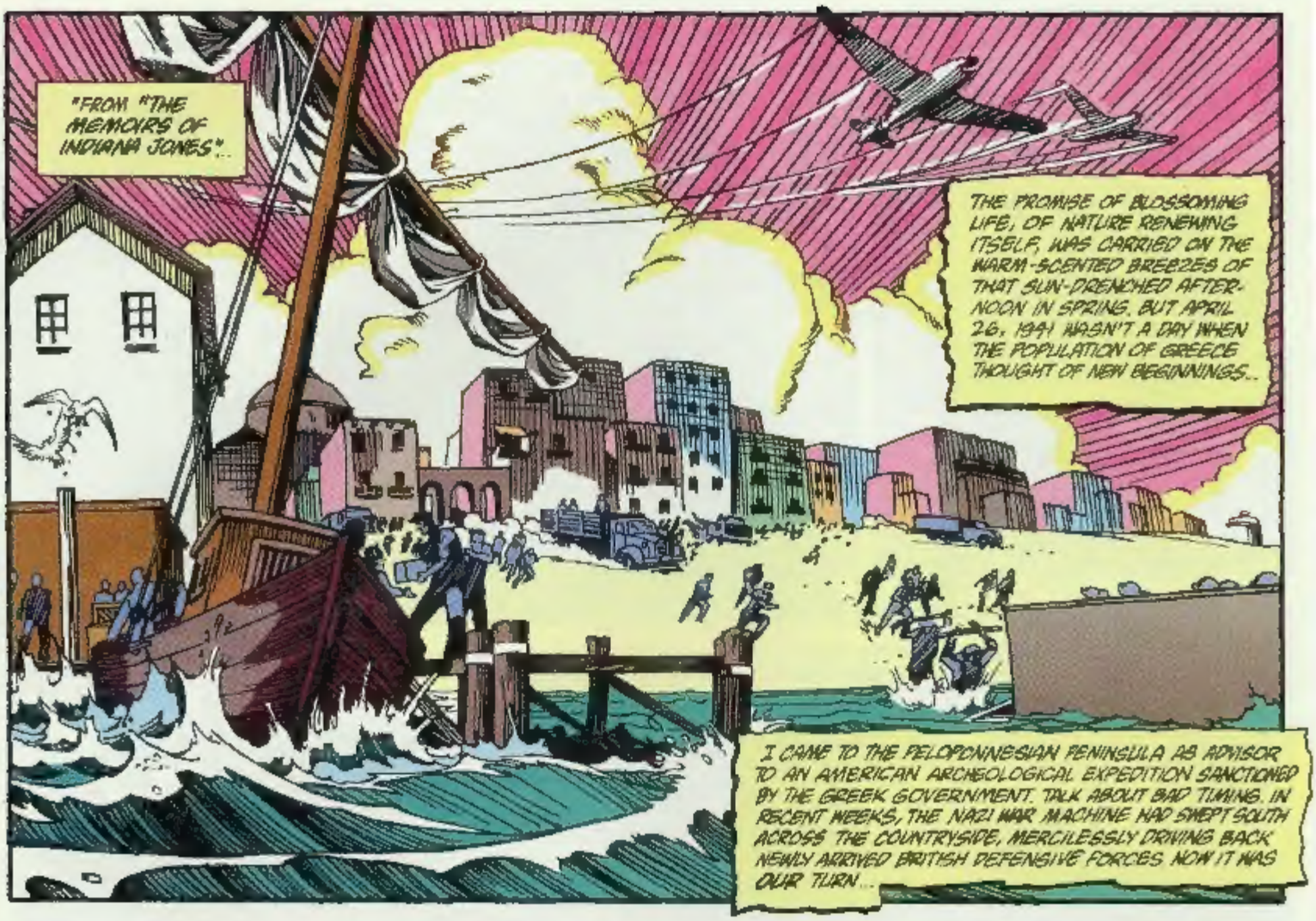
"FROM "THE MEMOIRS OF INDIANA JONES"..
THE PROMISE OF BLOSSOMING LIFE, OF NATURE RENEWING ITSELF, WAS CARRIED ON THE WARM-SCENTED BREEZES OF THAT SUN-DRENCHED AFTERNOON IN SPRING. BUT APRIL 26, 1941 WASN'T A DAY WHEN THE POPULATION OF GREECE THOUGHT OF NEW BEGINNINGS..
I CAME TO THE PELOPONNESSIAN PENINSULA AS ADVISOR TO AN AMERICAN ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION SANCTIONED BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. TALK ABOUT BAD TIMING. IN RECENT WEEKS, THE NAZI WAR MACHINE HAD SWEPT SOUTH ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE, MERCILESSLY DRIVING BACK NEWLY ARRIVED BRITISH DEFENSIVE FORCES. NOW IT WAS OUR TURN...

THIS IS AN OUTRAGE, COLONEL! WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO JUST...JUST DRAG US OFF AN EXCAVATION OF SUCH IMPORTANCE?!
MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, PROFESSOR. THE BRITISH ARMY DOESN'T ENJOY PLAYING WET NURSE TO A PACK OF GRAVE-DIGGING ACADEMICS.
GRAVEDIGGERS? THAT'S AN ACHAEAN KING'S TOMB AND PALACE UP THERE! A BRONZE AGE MEGARON! POSSIBLY CONTAINING ATREUS AND HIS TREASURE! BY TOMORROW WE'D HAVE THE BURIAL VAULT OPEN...

WE WARNED YOUR LOT TO CLEAR OUT A FORTNIGHT AGO BUT DID YOU LISTEN? WELL, NOW YOU HAVE TO GO! BY MORNING THERE'LL BE GERMANS SWARMING ALL OVER THESE HILLS!
DR. JONES! TALK SOME SENSE INTO THIS IDIOT!

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BUT, BUT...THE SITE IS COMPLETELY EXPOSED...ALL OF OUR WORK WILL FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE DAMNED NAZIS...
LOOK AT OUR TEAM, MALCOLM. THEY'RE STUDENTS...JUST KIDS, FOR GOD'S SAKE. WE CAN'T SUBJECT THEM TO THIS KIND OF DANGER.
PERHAPS IF WE LEFT A SKELETON CREW BEHIND?...
I HAVEN'T GOT THE TIME FOR THIS. I'VE GOT OVER 5,000 TROOPS TO EVACUATE.
TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS, COLONEL. I'LL GET THIS BUNCH ONTO THE LANDING CRAFT.
LET'S GO! HIT THE BEACH! HUSTLE!
NO! I WON'T DO IT!
I'M BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, DR. JONES! PUTTING PETTY POLITICS BEFORE YOUR PROFESSION!
SSSSSKKKRREEEE
MALCOLM! LOOK OUT! JUNKERS!
BA-BOOOM
:NUUUFF!:
THIS ISN'T POLITICS, MALCOLM! THIS IS WAR!
I'M BEGINNING TO SEE YOUR POINT...



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COME ON! EVERYBODY INTO THE LANDING CRAFT!
ALL ACCOUNTED FOR? GOOD...
I'LL TRY TO RENDEZVOUS WITH YOU IN ALEXANDRIA!
JONES! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CLOSE YOUR MOUTH, MALCOLM. YOU'LL CATCH FLIES.
ASSUMING THE TREASURE OF ATREUS IS IN THAT TOMB, SOMEBODY'S GOT TO BEAT THE NAZIS THERE TONIGHT!...
IF I DON'T MAKE IT, FORWARD MY MAIL CARE OF THE FUEHRER!

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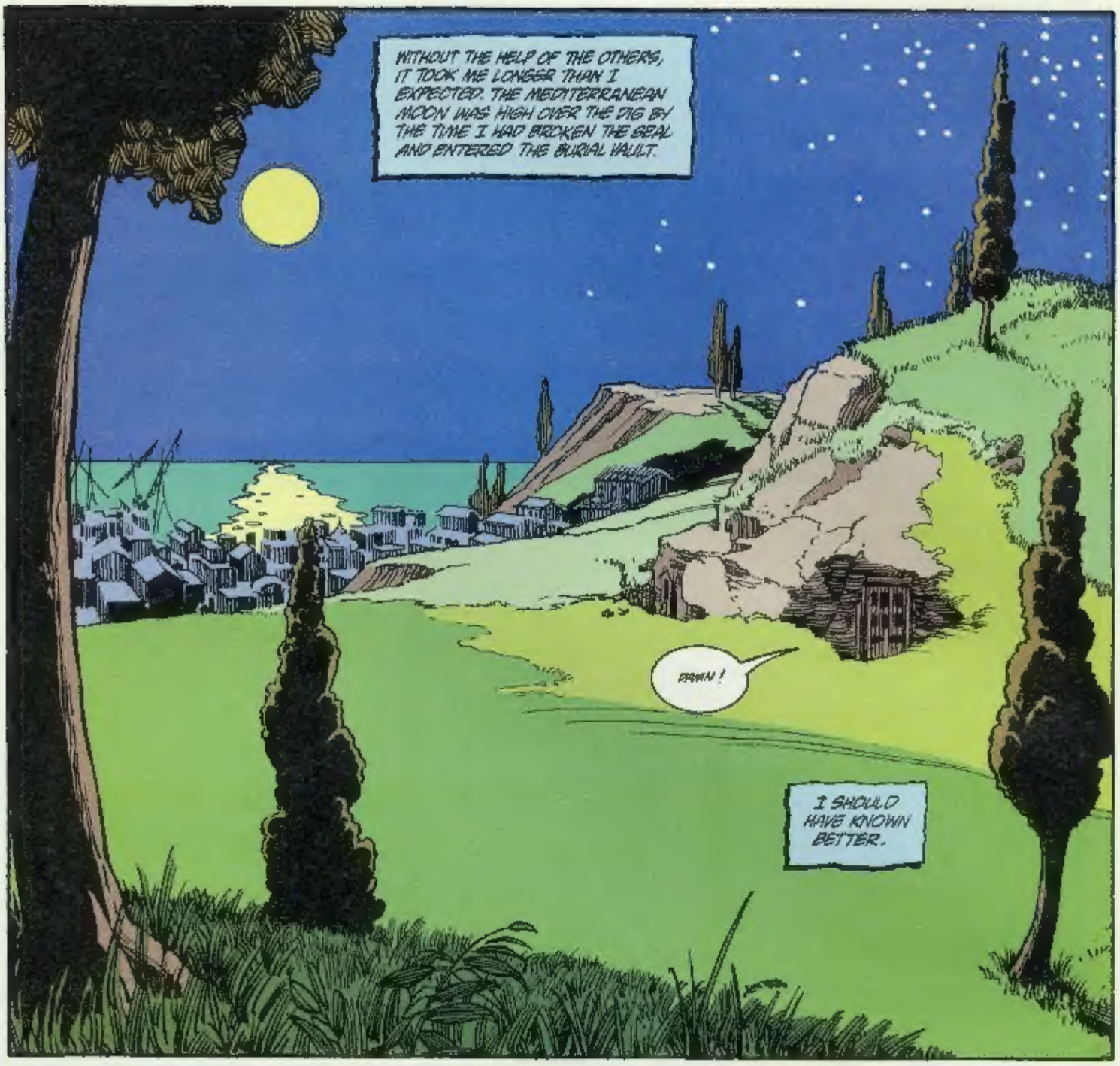
WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE OTHERS, IT TOOK ME LONGER THAN I EXPECTED. THE MEDITERRANEAN MOON WAS HIGH OVER THE DIG BY THE TIME I HAD BROKEN THE SEAL AND ENTERED THE BURIAL VAULT.
PAHN!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.

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IT WASN'T HARD TO GUESS WHAT HAD HAPPENED. A STORY AS OLD AS GREED ITSELF.
LOOKS LIKE YOUR PAL DIDN'T WANT TO SPLIT THE LOOT!
ARCHEOLOGY HAD TAUGHT ME MANY LESSONS. IF THIS WAS THE TOMB OF ATREUS, KING HIGH MUCKY-MUCK OF THE MYCENAE...
BUT MAYBE HE OVER-LOOKED SOMETHING!
...AND FATHER TO AGAMEMNON OF ARGOS, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE GREEK SACK OF TROY...
...THEN THERE HAD TO BE A SURPRISE OR TWO WAITING FOR ME. I WAS SURE OF IT!
CHILD'S PLAY FOR MRS. JONES' FAIR-HAIRED BOY!
"A FOOT ...FOR EACH... FINGER"?!
I PACED OFF A FOOT FOR EACH FINGER.
EIGHT ...NINE... TEN!
IF A GRAVE-ROBBING JASPER HADN'T BEATEN ME TO IT...
...SOMETHING WORTHY OF A KING'S CONUNDRUM...
...WAS WAITING FOR ME TO REVEAL IT TO THE WORLD!



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I JUST NEEDED A LITTLE HELP...
...TO COAX IT INTO THE LIGHT.
KLACK-KA
THE STUBBORN STONE WAS AS UNYIELDING AS THE CONQUERING MYCENAE THEMSELVES.
BUT I WAS DETERMINED TO UNCOVER THEIR PRECIOUS SECRET!
THE WORKMANSHIP WAS PRE-MYCENAEAN!
FROM ANCIENT COLCHIS!
WHERE MYTH HAD JASON AND HIS ARGONAUTS CLAIM THE GOLDEN FLEECE!



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WHEN I FINALLY LEFT THE TOMB, APOLLO HAD ALREADY RIDDEN HIS CHARIOT INTO THE SKY.
MY IMAGINATION . AND MY NITS, TOO, IT TURNED OUT HAD RACED EAST TO THE FAR SHORE OF THE BLACK SEA. THE RUMORED HOME OF ANCIENT COLCHIS.. THE CAUCASUS!
LUCKILY, I SAW HIM FIRST!
(HEY!)
NOT SO LUCKILY HE WASN'T THE ONLY GERMAN AROUND.
(WHO ARE YOU? GREEK? OR BRITISH, MAYBE?!)
EVIDENTLY, I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE BUSY DURING THE NIGHT
(SURROUND HIM! DON'T LET THE SPY ESCAPE!)
AN ADVANCE OF GERMAN ENGINEERS WAS SETTING UP A QUICK AND-DIRTY LITTLE LANDING STRIP.
STAY BACK! OR THIS MAN GETS IT! I'M NOT FOOLING AROUND!
(TRANSLATED FROM GERMAN)

NOW LOOK I KNOW YOU GUYS ARE JUST ENGINEERS NOT REAL SOLDIERS
YOU DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE ... NOBODY HERE WANTS TO GET HURT
(YOUR USE OF THIS MAN AS A SHIELD IS FUTILE EVERY GERMAN SOLDIER IS WILLING TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE FATHER LAND!)
PAK!
JEEZ..
(AND NOW, YOU'RE NEXT!)
WUUUFF
PAK
BAM
POW
(AFTER HIM!)

I HAD LIVED THROUGH MANY A CHASE BEFORE THAT DAY
WHA.. UH
PA-TICK
PA TING
..AND DODGED MANY A SPEAR, ARROW, AND BULLET
BUT IT HAD BEEN A LONG TIME
(HEADING INTO TOWN!)
..SINCE I HAD RIDDEN A BIKE!
RNG
PA-KOW
IT WAS TRUE, THOUGH
(..BICYCLE ..KILL..)
YOU REALLY DON'T FORGET HOW TO RIDE ONE
BUDDA BUDDA
SHUFA- ...HUFA.. HUFA!
SKREECH

IN FACT, THERE ARE IDEAL MOMENTS.
:NUH NUH NUH...:
WHEEEERRR
KA-WHAH
VOOMPA
WHEN IT CAN BE QUITE EXHILARATING!
:WHHAAAHH:
(THIS WAY!)
YES!
ON A GOOD SLOPE, YOU CAN BUILD UP A REAL HEAD OF STEAM!
OF COURSE, AN OCCASIONAL RUT OR BUMP SHOULD BE EXPECTED.
OH-UH-HHA-NA-NA-HUP-HAH-WHA-UH-UH-UH
. AND CAREFULLY ADJUSTED FOR
WHAAAAAA
WUNK

THESE AND OTHER ANNOYING OBSTACLES
CLUMP
KLUMP
KLUMPA
CLUMP
KLUM
ARE PAR FOR THE COURSE
DAMN!
(OVER HERE! HURRY!)
(THIS HOUND SMELLS THE FOX GOING TO GROUND! THE HUNT IS NEAR ENDED!)

(YOUNG MAID! ARE YOU ALONE HERE?)
(WE ARE LOOKING FOR A MAN. MAYBE YOU HAVE SEEN HIM. WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE A MAN?)
(DRAG HER OUT!)
(IT WOULD SEEM SHE'S BEEN WITH A MAN AT LEAST ONCE WITHIN THE LAST EIGHT MONTHS, COMMANDER.)
(DON'T STAND THERE LIKE GEESE! REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE SOLDIERS UNDER MY COMMAND!)
(CIVILIAN SPIES WILL BE EXECUTED! AS WILL ALL MEMBERS OF ANY HOUSEHOLD WHICH HARBORS SUCH CRIMINALS!)

IN THE COURSE OF MY TRAVELS, I'VE SPENT TIME IN SAUNAS, STEAM ROOMS, MINERAL SPRINGS
GET OUT! QUICKLY, QUICKLY! THEY MIGHT BE COMING BACK!
BUT BATHING IN OLIVE OIL WAS AN ENTIRELY NEW EXPERIENCE
HUUAAHHH
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?
AH, SURE POPPA, HE'S DEAD NOW HE HAD LITTLE CARGO PLANE BUSINESS WITH LOTS OF COUNTRIES I PICK UP LANGUAGES I AM OMPHALE KIAPOS AND YOU? BRITISH?
AMERICAN DR JONES, BARNETT COLLEGE BUT INDY WILL DO JUST FINE LOOK YOU REALLY HELPED ME OMPHALE THANKS I M GRATEFUL
NOW YOU GOT TO GET OUT OF GREECE, RIGHT? GOOD! I GO WITH YOU
WHOA, WHOA! WAIT A MINUTE WHAT ABOUT YOUR YOUR HUSBAND?
HMM?! AH! GONE DESERTED ARMY HE'S A WEASEL REAL SON OF A BITCH
YEAH YOU'VE GOT A COMMAND OF THE LANGUAGE, ALL RIGHT
HEY, YOU THINK I WANT TO HAVE MY BABY HERE? IN LAND THAT IS ..UH...OCCUPIED WITH NAZIS?
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS --
COME! MAYBE WE FIND A FISHING BOAT!

FAT CHANCE EVERYTHING'S BEEN STRAFED OR BOMBED LOOKS LIKE THE GERMANS HAVE DONE THEIR USUAL THOROUGH JOB
OKAY YOU STAY HERE KEEP OUT OF SIGHT I'LL GO DOWN THERE AND SEE IF MAYBE SOMETHING CAN BE SALVAGED
BE CARE FUL
IN RETROSPECT, I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT I'D HAD THE FEELING I WAS BEING WATCHED --MAYBE FOR WEEKS AND AT THIS MOMENT MORE THAN EVER
NOTHING
BUT I CAN'T
HINDSIGHT IS GOLDEN MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEY WERE SNEAKING UP ON ME
WHA?
CREEEEEEEK
BUT I DIDN'T!
HEY!

THESE GOONS IN THEIR BATHROBES WERE ALL OVER ME SHRIEKING IN FRENZY FROTHING AT THE MOUTH

OOOOOFFF!

MY TURKISH IS RUSTY BUT I CAUGHT SOME SNATCHES

(WHERE IS IT?! WHERE IS IT?!)

BAWLAP!

(HOPE OF THE EMPIRE!)

(TOOL OF SALVATION!)

KLOP

UNNNGH!

(FOR THE DARK ONE! FOR THE GODDESS!)

(BLADE OF RECONSECRATION!)

(FOR HECATE AND THE FLEECE!)

(TRANSLATED FROM TURKISH)



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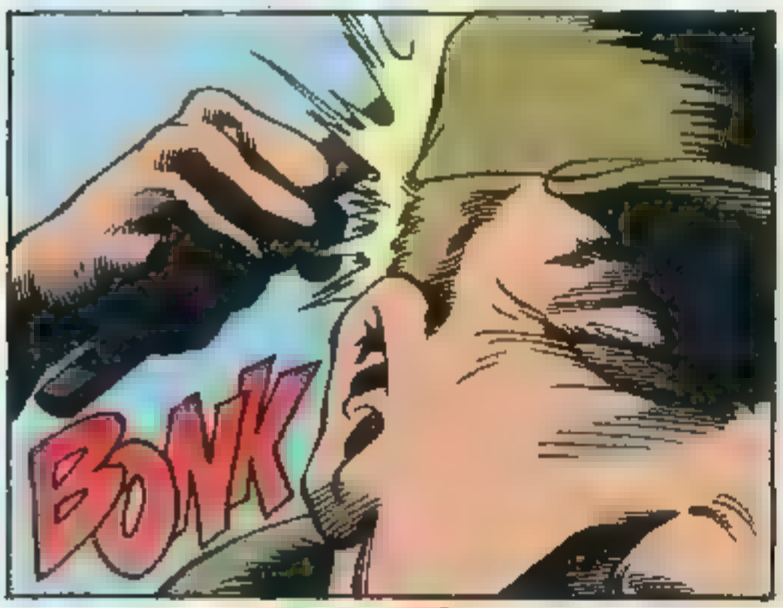
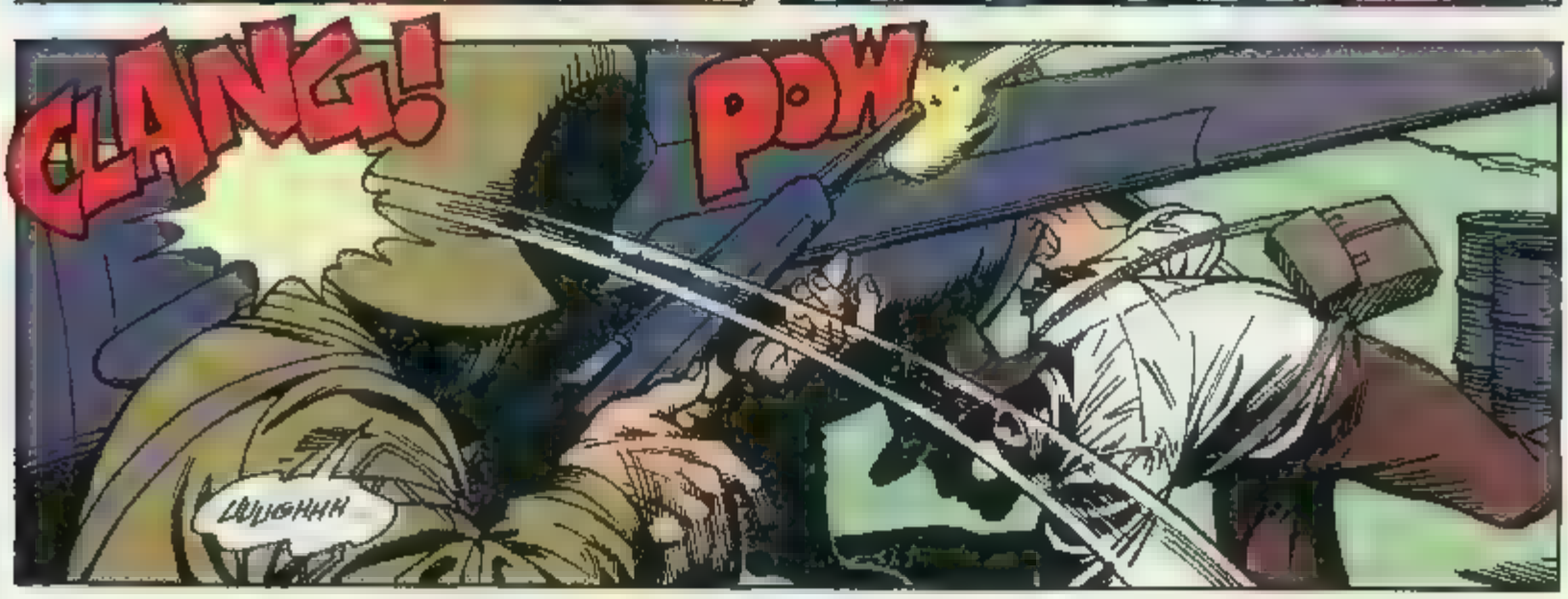
AAIIEE!
KA-RAAAK!
GET AWAY FROM HIM! LET HIM BE! NOW! I WILL KILL YOU! I SWEAR IT!
OOOHHH
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHO WERE THEY?
I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS
DON'T KNOW NOT NAZIS TURKS THEY TOOK THE KNIFE DAMN DAMN DAMN! I ONCE PROMISED MYSELF THAT NOBODY WOULD EVER SNATCH A MUSEUM ARTIFACT FROM ME AGAIN!
LOOK!
A SEA PLANE! UNDER CAMOUFLAGE NETTING
THEY'RE FLYING OVER AEGEAN NORTHEAST? ISTANBUL?
I'M GOING AFTER THEM
I HAD A FRIEND IN ISTANBUL. HE WAS A WORLD-CLASS AUTHORITY ON THE GOLDEN FLEECE AND ALL ITS LORE. WAS THIS COINCIDENCE? SERENDIPITY? FATE?
IN THE END, WHAT DID IT MATTER?
OMPHALE, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU. YOU'VE SAVED ME. SAVED ME TWICE. I'M SORRY
HOW?
BUT WHAT I'VE GOT IN MIND IS JUST TOO RISKY TO DRAG A PREGNANT WOMAN ALONG!





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THAT'S THREE TIMES THIS IS GETTING TO BE HABIT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? DIDN'T I SAY
I'M FLYING OUT OF GREECE
THIS IS TOO DANGEROUS! GET DOWN FROM THERE!
AND IF YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME YOU BETTER HOW DO YOU SAY? SHAKE A FOOT!
OH LOOKS
MOVE OVER
IT'S OKAY I ALREADY GOT THE STICK
YOU CAN FLY?!
I TOLD YOU POPPA HAD CARGO PLANE I SIT ON HIS LAP
RRROOOOMMMOOMMMM
BUDDA BUDDA
KRAK
PAK
KRAK

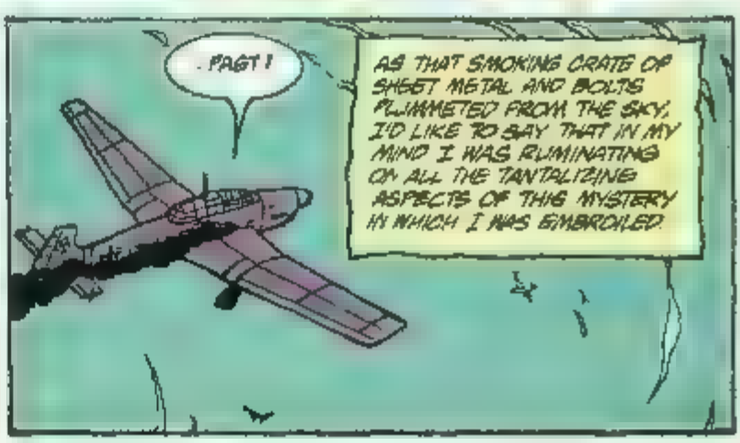
WE'RE IN LUCK NO SIGN OF PURSUIT. SO FAR, SO GOOD
YOU KNOW, I AM WONDERING.. "INDY" WHAT KIND OF NAME IS THAT? "INDY"
IT'S SHORT FOR INDIANA
INDIANA? WHY WOULD PARENTS NAME CHILD INDIANA? WHAT WERE THEY THINKING? ISN'T THAT AMERICAN PROVINCE?
STATE WE CALL THEM STATES INDIANA IS A NICKNAME
STUPID NICKNAME. LOOK THERE IS SEA PLANE
BINGO! THEY CAN'T MATCH OUR SPEED WE'LL CATCH UP IN A COUPLE OF--
BRAATT-A-TATT
BRAKA-BRAKA
TA TIT
BRAKA BRAKA
MESSERSCHMITTS!! WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?
BRAAATT

IT'S THEIR ADVANTAGE! SEE IF YOU CAN GET ON TOP! GET ABOVE THEM!
NO! NO! NO! ARE YOU NUTS?! I SAID GET ABOVE!
OH WAIT THIS IS BETTER
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
KA-WHOOOOOM
BRAT-A-BRAT
BRAT-A-BRATT
HOLD ON
THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL OMPHALE! NOW DO SOMETHING ELSE!
PA-CHINK KA-CHUNK
PA-CHUNK

I AM BROTHERLESS HE HAD NO CHOICE
YOUR POPPA TAUGHT YOU HOW TO BARREL-ROLL!!
BUDDA BUDDA
PERFECT! I'VE CRIPPLED HIM!
THEY'RE ON A COLLISION-COURSE! KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED

KA-DA-WHOOM!!

BULL'S EYE!
WE ARE NOT OUT OF THE TREES YET WE'RE LOSING ALTITUDE
AS I'VE SAID BEFORE, HINDSIGHT IS GOLDEN


FAGT!
AS THAT SMOKING CRATE OF SHEET METAL AND BOLTS PLUMMETED FROM THE SKY, I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT IN MY MIND I WAS RUMINATING ON ALL THE TANTALIZING ASPECTS OF THIS MYSTERY IN WHICH I WAS EMBROILED.

..THAT I WAS PUZZLING OUT THE SECRETS OF MY FANATICAL ASSAILANTS, THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE FABLED FLEECE AND THE DARK GODDESS HECATE..

PULL UP! PULL UP!

I'M TRYING!

..THAT I WAS LOOKING FORWARD WITH EAGER ANTICIPATION TO A REUNION IN ISTANBUL WITH AN OLD FRIEND WHO MIGHT PLUG THE HOLES IN MY LOGIC

WE'RE HEADING STRAIGHT INTO THE DARDANELLES!

..OR THAT I WAS AMUSED AT THE PROSPECT OF PLUNGING INTO THE HELLESPONT--THE VERY SPOT WHERE LITTLE HELLE TUMBLED TO HER DOOM FROM THE FLYING RAM OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE AS IT HURTLED TOWARD ITS OWN DESTINY IN ANCIENT COLCHIS..

THINK WE WILL DIE?

YEAH

..I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT THE IRONY OF MY PREDICAMENT WAS NOT LOST TO ME..

BUT IT WAS

TO BE CONTINUED...

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to abruptly shift gears? Could it have been, for our purposes, the mystical influence of the Golden Fleece?

So we had a locale in which to begin our story — the Peloponnesian Peninsula of Greece somewhere near the site of old Mycenae. Indy would be excavating a fictional tomb belonging to Arteus, father of Agamemnon. But at what period of Indy's life, what precise point of time in the 20th century? There seemed to be no more dramatic and threatening moment for a Peloponnesian archeological dug than during the rout by the German juggernaut of the British from the Greek peninsula: the last fighting force left to face the Axis on the European continent.

Greece had been brought into the Second World War by Italy's attack of October 28, 1940. By mid-November, the Greek Army had stopped the Italian offensive and actually managed to gain ground into Albania, western neighbor of Greece, a buffer bordering the Adriatic Sea beyond which dwelt the Italian coast. On December 13, 1940, Hitler, needing to secure his Balkan flank for the attack on Russia planned for the summer of 1941, directed the beginning of Operation Maritsa — the German invasion of Greece.

In March 1941, German troops massed in Bulgaria on the eastern Yugoslavian border, just north of Greece. By March 25, Yugoslavia was forced to align itself with the Axis. Two days later, the Yugoslavian populace revolted against this capitulation and overthrew its Belgrade government. On Easter Sunday, April 6, 1941, Hitler responded by invading Yugoslavia and on into Greece.

The British, expecting a German attack, had prepared by making a heroic scramble to pull into Greece from the North African front what shallow resources it could muster. The defensive focus of the 53,000 troops of the British Expeditionary Force was outflanked in three days. The continuing Anglo-Greek attempt to slow the German invasion first reformed along a Mount Olympus line. When this resistance fell, there was no longer any doubt that Greece was lost to occupation.

The best the British could do was to salvage part of its forces in a mass evacuation, an evacuation under conditions worse than Dunkirk the year before. Little air cover was available for safe retreat. It was far to any friendly shore. Little shipping was available for transport. A delaying action to permit embarkation of the main forces was fought along roughly a 30-mile stretch centered on the historic Pass of Thermopylae.

The British evacuation from Peloponnesian ports withdrew to Crete and Alexandria. It is during this tide of 41,000 troops streaming to sea (April 24 – May 1, 1941) that we chose to open our story. It was by swimming against this tide that Indy becomes launched toward war-time Istanbul, toward ancient Colchis beyond, and embroiled in arcane mysteries of primal force....

Stick around for next month's conclusion to *Indiana Jones and the Golden Fleece.*

— Pat & Dave

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— Pat & Dave

# INDIANA JONES AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE

## David Lawson, Pat McGreal, and Ken Hooper

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12:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

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4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.

Crush Comics and Cards
2869 Castro Valley Blvd.
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**July 24, 1994**
12:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

Flying Colors Comics
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2980 Treat Blvd.
Concord, California
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**July 24, 1994**
3:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Stand-Up Comics
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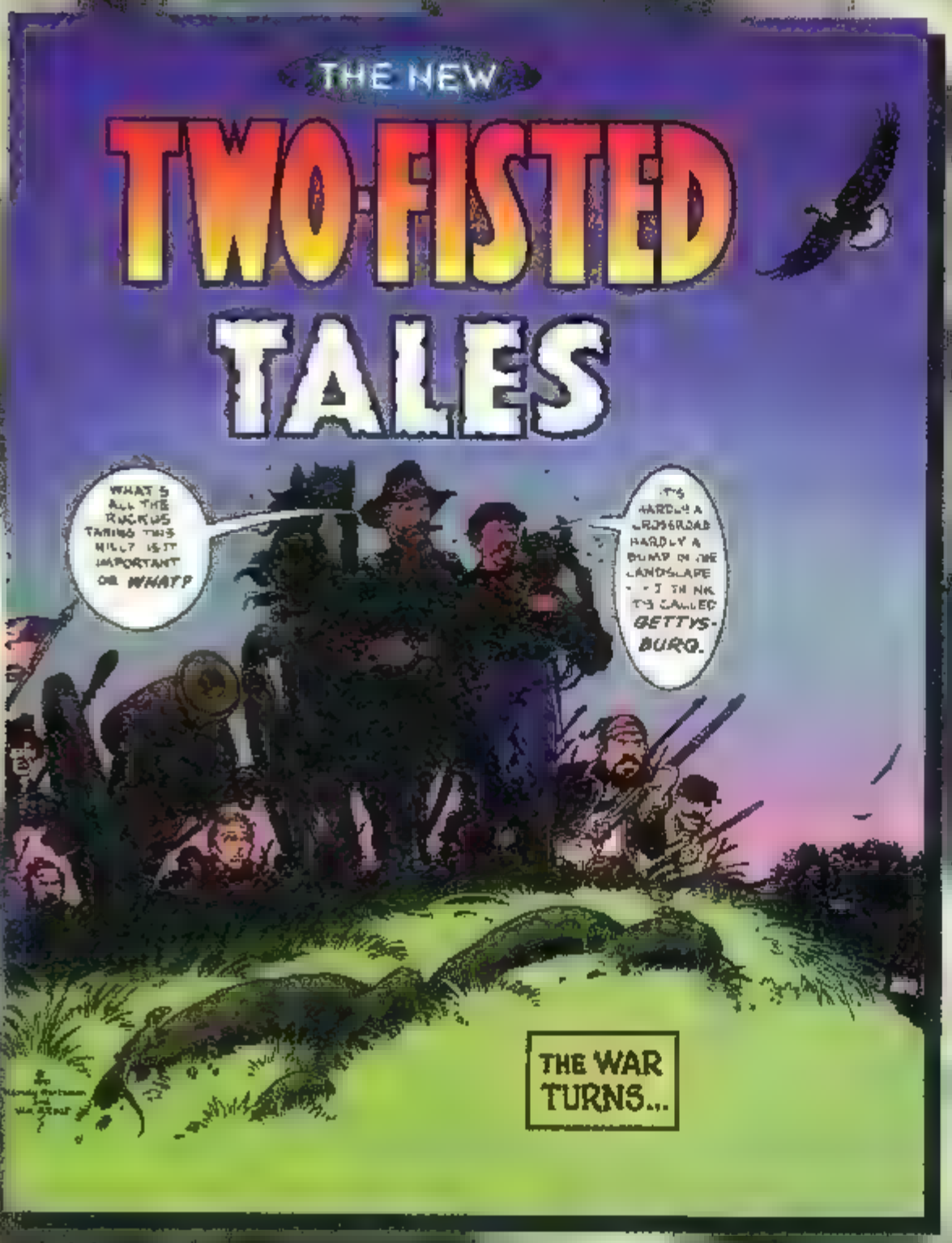
# YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU'RE IN A WAR, EVEN IF YOU MAKE IT HOME.


THE NEW
TWO-FISTED TALES
WHAT'S ALL THE RACKUS TAMING THIS HILL? IS IT IMPORTANT OR WHAT?
IT'S HARDLY A CROSSROAD HARDLY A BUMP IN THE LANDSCAPE - I THINK IT'S CALLED GETTYS-BURG.
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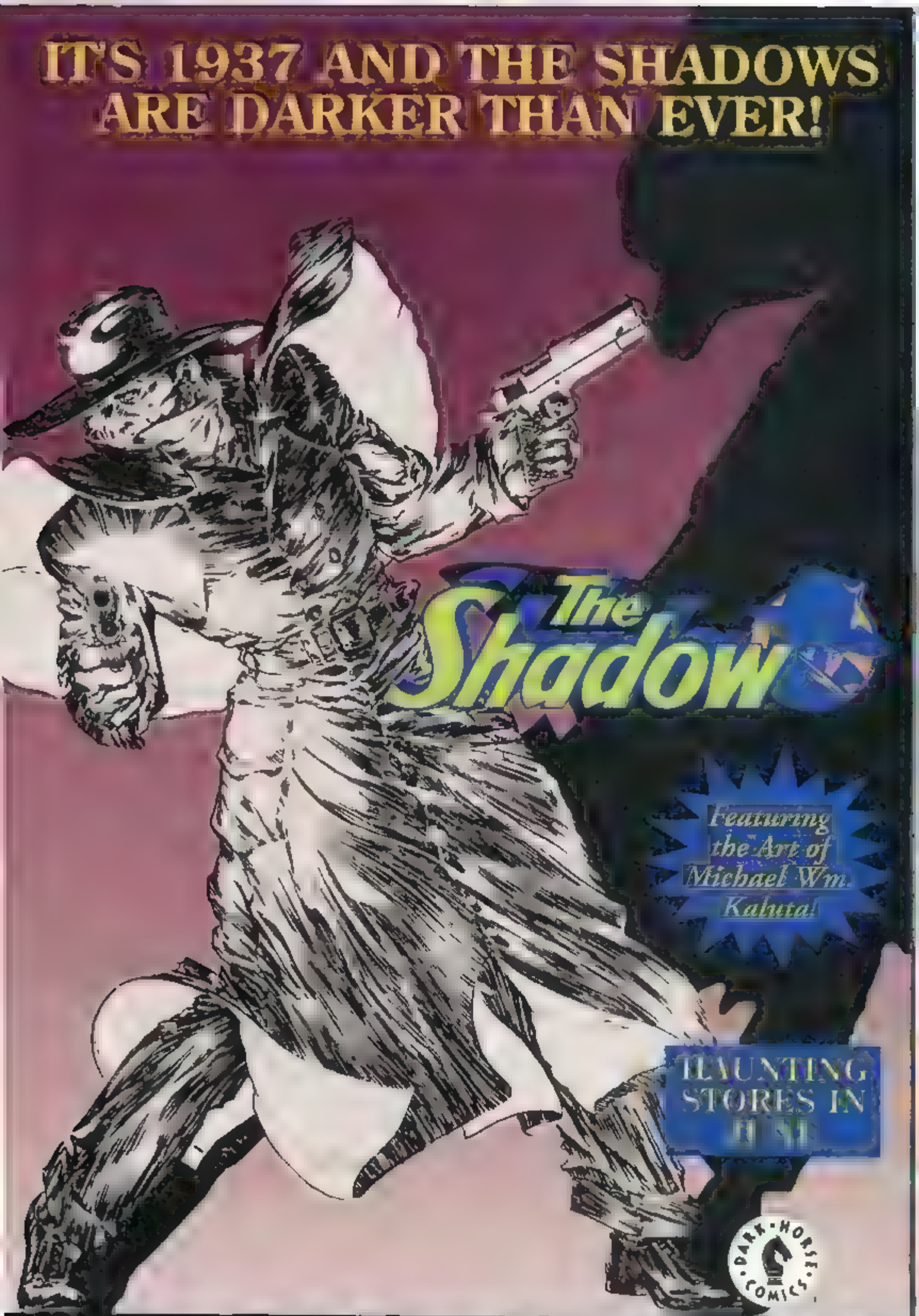

# The Shadow

*Featuring the Art of Michael Wm. Kaluta!*

HAUNTING STORIES IN [illegible]

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# FINISH LINE

There's nothing quite like the glazed, half-patronizing, half-confused expression people give you when you tell them that you edit comic books. You meet someone, strike up a conversation, and invariably the question comes up: "What do you do?" If you answer, "I edit comic books," you'll get that look. Every time.

If you say you write comics, or draw comics, people think they have an idea of what you're talking about: comics artists draw their pictures in those little boxes, and the writers then come along and put words in the bubbles above the characters' heads, right? But editing?

## JUNE CHECKLIST

### SHIPPING JUNE 7

- ❑ CLASSIC STAR WARS #20
- ❑ CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON COLD-CAST KIT
- ❑ DARK HORSE DOWNUNDER #1
- ❑ IAN FLEMING'S JAMES BOND 007: SHATTERED HELIX #1
- ❑ JOE R. LANSDALE'S BY BIZARRE HANDS #3
- ❑ RACK & RAIN #4
- ❑ TITAN SPECIAL #1

### SHIPPING JUNE 14

- ❑ ALIENS: STRONGHOLD #2
- ❑ ATLAS #3
- ❑ DARK HORSE PRESENTS #86
- ❑ DARK HORSE INSIDER #33
- ❑ INDIANA JONES AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE #1
- ❑ JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN #28: POWER #4
- ❑ MADMAN COMICS #2
- ❑ OUT OF THE VORTEX #9
- ❑ WILL TO POWER #1

### SHIPPING JUNE 21

- ❑ BARB WIRE #3
- ❑ CARAVAN KIDD PART 3 #3
- ❑ ENEMY #2
- ❑ GRENDEL TALES: THE DEVIL IN OUR MIDST #2
- ❑ HELLBOY: SEED OF DESTRUCTION #4
- ❑ STAR WARS: DROIDS #3
- ❑ WILL TO POWER #2
- ❑ X #8

### SHIPPING JUNE 28

- ❑ CATALYST: AGENTS OF CHANGE #5
- ❑ CLASSIC STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE #1
- ❑ CLASSIC STAR WARS VOLUME ONE (TRADE PAPERBACK COLLECTION)
- ❑ DARK HORSE COMICS #22
- ❑ HELLHOUNDS: PANZER COPS #5
- ❑ JONNY DEMON #2
- ❑ MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR #2
- ❑ PREDATOR: BAD BLOOD #4
- ❑ THE SHADOW #1
- ❑ WHITE LIKE SHE #2
- ❑ WILL TO POWER #3

"You mean you check to make sure the words are spelled correctly?"

Well, yeah. That, and about a million other things — no one of which sounds particularly difficult, but taken together can add up to the equivalent of sorting garter snakes from rattlesnakes... in the dark. It's nerve-wracking, time-consuming, potentially disastrous, and you can never tell how well you've done your job until it's too late. You think I'm exaggerating? Okay, I am — a little. Am I complaining? Not a bit.

Sure, it's possible to screw up and be an accomplice to creating a mess. An editor can pair a writer with an artist who refuses to draw what the writer has called for. Or an editor can team a penciller with an entirely inappropriate inker. At worst, an editor can sleepwalk through a project and end up with a story that the readers find boring. But, when everything comes together, the editor can feel proud to have had a hand in helping to create something that everyone is happy with.

Unfortunately, many things can go wrong that are beyond the editor's ability to control. Things like changes in publishing schedules, packages lost by shipping companies (though this — once a favorite freelancer excuse for lateness — is becoming a rarity in these days of minute-to-minute computerized tracking), and, general freelancer tardiness. For instance, if the penciller on a project is late, it may force the inker to bow out in order to meet his or her commitments to another project — which means the editor is on the phone, scrambling to find a new inker. And, possibly, a new letterer and a new colorist.

So, what sort of things *do* fall within an editor's control? Well, say a writer forgets a pertinent story point and leaves a gaping hole in a plot; the editor sees that the hole is repaired — even if it means rewriting script pages his- or herself. If a letterer mistakenly assigns one character's dialogue to another, the editor puts the balloons back in their correct order. If a colorist inadvertently mis-codes a character's Y5R3B3 hair (brown) as Y5R1B3 (almost green), you-know-who has to change the character's hair back to the right color.

Plus, there are lots of tasks that do not have anything to do with actually editing the material that are still the editor's responsibility: maintaining budgets, tracking vouchers and contracts, writing solicitation copy, working with marketing to come up with ad copy, writing letter columns, chaperoning visiting freelancers, and writing columns like this one.

The editor is the go-between for the company and the creator. With a foot in both camps, the editor must always keep the company's best interests in mind, while at the same time keep the freelancers happy and committed.

The editor is the bridge between the writer and the penciller, the penciller and the inker, etc., on down the line.

Depending on the situation, the editor is sometimes the freelancer's best friend, sometimes his or her worst enemy. Part cheerleader, part offensive guard; part father confessor, part nagging parent; part commiserator, part demanding boss. A stick in one hand, a carrot in the other, an editor becomes adept at using both, and, hopefully, at knowing which one to use when.

But, as far as editing actual material is concerned, the most important role the editor plays is that of you, the reader. The editor must put himself in the position of a first-time reader — someone who knows nothing about the characters or the situations in the comic. Does the story make sense? Is it clear who the characters are and what part they play in the story when they first appear in panel? Does the dialogue ring true? Is what's happening in the story entertaining? Is the reader made to feel involved with the characters and their plight? Do the events on each page make the reader want to go on to the next?

One thing is for sure in all of this: every editor has his or her own way of sorting the garter snakes from the rattlers. Next month we'll hear from an assortment of your favorite editors here at Dark Horse on how they avoid getting bitten.

—Randy Stradley


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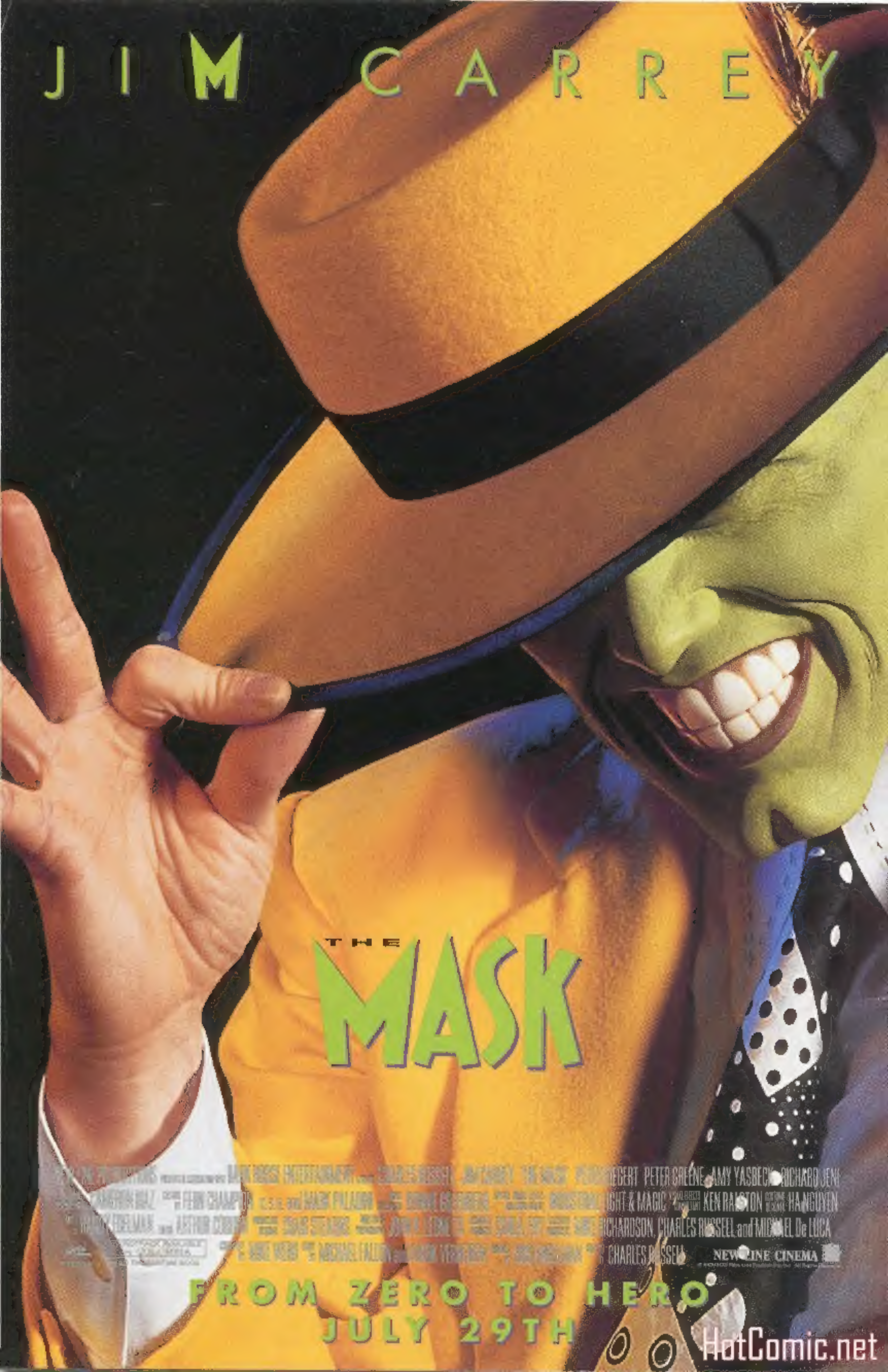


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